

## **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in Tigray: An element in a national DDR/SSR program or a compassionate humanitarian need for returning combatants in Tigray region?**

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August 2023

### **Summary**

1. The proposal for disarmament demobilization and reintegration in Tigray, formulated by the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Interim Regional Government of Tigray, is not DDR in the textbook sense. It is neither an element of nationwide DDR nor integrated within security sector reform. Instead, it should be defined as a limited humanitarian and welfare exercise as part of the urgent rehabilitation of Tigray.
2. Security sector reform (SSR) is the political and technical process of improving the security of citizens through the professionalization, effectiveness and accountability of military, police, security/intelligence, justice and related institutions. The need for SSR emanates from the negative effects of an ineffective security sector in hampering peace and development. The intent is not limited to the needs of the state but prioritizes the needs of the citizens. The end result should be creating an enabling environment for human security and sustainable development as well as the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force.
3. Disarmament demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants is not a technical fix for a technical problem but a political project that follows a wider plan for SSR, peacebuilding and sustainable development. The metric for assessing DDR is its coherent implementation within such a wider strategic plan. Counting the numbers of individuals who have been processed through a DDR plan is entirely secondary to this. The Ethiopian experience of 1991-1997 could be referred as an example that clearly shows the link between SSR and DDR.<sup>1</sup>
4. Currently, there is a dire need for reforming the Ethiopian security sector. The army is bloated in number and seriously de-professionalized. It has committed war crimes

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<sup>1</sup> See: 'Further Reading' at the end of this memo.

- and crimes against humanity during the Tigray war. There is a proliferation of additional armed formations created or authorized by Federal and/or regional authorities. The law enforcement authorities are also dysfunctional and there is no meaningful peace and development without having a substantive reform on the security sector.
5. However, the intent, agenda and plans of the Federal Government of Ethiopia for DDR are different. There is no comprehensive SSR/DDR. Instead, it is a way of addressing the disarmament of the Tigray Defense Force (TDF) and a project for mobilizing donor funds in the name of DDR.
  6. Currently the Ethiopian government is using violence as a primary means for resolving conflicts. It was at war in Tigray and is now at war in Oromia, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambela regions. For a real SSR/DDR to take place in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian government needs to engage in a genuine dialogue to address the grievances of citizens and resolve conflicts.
  7. A large number of ex-combatants need to return to civilian life in Tigray. They include disabled veterans who need specialized care. There is a need to mobilize huge resources for the reintegration and rehabilitation of returning combatants and this is done among many competing priorities of reconstruction in the region. But this should not be defined as a DDR program, as Tigray cannot undertake DDR alone. Instead, the program should be redefined as humanitarian and welfare program and supported accordingly. It should be clear that this project is confined to Tigray and is neither an Ethiopia-wide project nor integrated within SSR. Instead, Tigray-focused assistance to former Tigrayan combatants should be planned and implemented as part of the wider re-construction plan for Tigray. Nevertheless, it should be understood that reintegration challenge of returning ex-combatants into civilian life, in the circumstances of Tigray is most challenging as the socio-economic status of the host communities is totally destroyed. From among the returnees, the program should give priority to addressing the rehabilitation and reintegration of disabled veterans and should consider utilizing reconstruction projects as a means for reintegration of ex-combatants.

## **I. Introduction**

8. The Ethiopian Federal government claims to have a national DDR agenda. This claim was expressed by the formation of national DDR Commission was formed on November 23, 2022, by Council of Ministers' regulation no. 525 (2022), following the signing of the Pretoria Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).
9. The Commission is led by a commissioner and two deputies (one representing the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and the second one representing Tigray). A national council composed of ministry of defense, labor and skill, women and social affairs, health, education, and finance has been formed to oversee the plans

and activities of the Commission. Administratively the Commission is formed under the Ministry for Peace.

10. The task of the Commission was defined: to demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants. The regulation defines an ex-combatant as a former ex-combatant who took part in conflicts in any part of the country, being a member of an organized armed group, and designated as such for demobilization and reintegration based on criteria to be defined pursuant to a directive to be issued in accordance with this regulation from an assortment of armed groups in the country (Part one No. 2(1) of the regulation).
11. From this definition, one should understand several points. The first is that the demobilization is only applicable to members coming from an assortment of armed groups that has been fighting, mostly against the government but also including some irregular forces mobilized by the government. It does not apply to any formal regular members of the ENDF. The second one is that the demobilization targets only those ex-combatants designated for demobilization based on a criterion to be established by a directive following the regulation. One would therefore assume that some of the ex-combatants will be reintegrated into either the ENDF or any of the formal security institutions of the government.
12. In its eight months of life the Commission has mostly been engaged in organizing itself along with engaging in some awareness building workshops. Most recently, it came up with an estimated caseload for its program, in consultation with the regions expected to produce ex-combatant candidates for reintegration. Thus far the total caseload for DDR is a total of 371,000 ex-combatants of which 274,000 are members of the Tigray Defense Force (TDF). A further 58,000 were from Amhara region, the region that has now entered into war with the Federal Government. This new conflict will eliminate that caseload, because many of them have returned to fighting on either side of the fighting forces. The remaining 30,000 are from the Afar, Gambela, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia, and the Southern Nations and Nationalities regions.
13. From this, one can raise several questions. Does Ethiopia really have a DDR/SSR program? Would there be any integration of ex-combatants into the regular security institutions? Is this program the disarmament of the TDF under the name of DDR? If Ethiopia does not have a DDR program but the authorities in Tigray are engaged in the disarmament and demobilization of their combatants, how should it be addressed? How could the reintegration of combatants in Tigray take place in the context of the reconstruction of the region?

## **II. The Context for SSR and DDR**

14. The idea of security sector reform (SSR) emanates from the negative effects of an ineffective security sector in hampering peace and development. The intent for

- reforming the sector is to provide legitimate, effective, and efficient security for the people, enabling peace and development (human security). The goal is not limited to the state and the capability of its security institutions (state security). The concept of SSR refers to approaches and processes aimed at establishing a well governed security sector that is accountable to the people and capable of providing security effectively and efficiently and in accordance with democratic principles.
15. Disarmament demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is not a technical fix for a technical problem but a political project that follows a wider plan for SSR. It can have various goals. One clear reason could be the fact that the army is oversized and its ranks filled with individuals that are not properly fit for the its tasks. But there could also be other related political reasons that may call for changing the national composition of the army.
  16. The end state for SSR is an effective, efficient, and legitimate security sector. Such an end-state can only be achieved through a process that adheres to the principles of good governance, which includes the principles of democratic control, oversight and accountability, and adherence to the rule of law. One should therefore understand that the SSR concept as it is promoted today refers to include not only the (end state) but also the process for achieving it referring to the principles, mechanisms and practices necessary to achieve the end state.

### **III. The Link between DDR and SSR**

17. DDR and SSR as processes should be interrelated and mutually reinforcing. As DDR and SSR share the same objective—consolidation of the state’s monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law—they succeed or fail together and should be planned, resourced, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated manner. The natural point of intersection for DDR and SSR is in the reintegration phase, as many ex-combatants find employment in the security apparatus that SSR creates.
18. DDR helps ensure the long-term success of SSR, as it shifts ex-combatants into the new security forces, where they no longer threaten the state’s monopoly of force. If done properly, this reenforces the peace settlement by fostering mutual trust between former enemies, encouraging further disarmament and transition into civilian life.
19. SSR helps ensure the long-term success of DDR, as security-sector governance includes ministry programs that provide for the welfare of former combatants. This focus prevents ex-combatants from becoming insurgents or joining criminal gangs. At the same time, effective SSR produces professional security forces that can control spoilers and contain violence.
20. DDR and SSR together promote development by preserving resources and infrastructure, freeing and managing labor, and supporting reconciliation that encourages investment and entrepreneurship. They also promote the interests of women, mi-

norities, and former child soldiers, who should be supported in a consistent manner between the two programs.

#### IV. Is There a Need for SSR and DDR in Ethiopia?

21. Security and development are closely connected. It is for this reason that the security sector in post-conflict societies needs to be reformed to fit to the new status quo. Security sector transformation includes the reform of security, law enforcement, and justice institutions. A reformed security sector always creates an enabling environment for political and socio-economic growth and this is so particularly in conflict affected societies.

##### ***The Ethiopian Security Sector Is Oversized***

22. The total size of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) at the start of the Tigray war was limited to 9 infantry and three mechanized divisions. The standard manpower requirement for an infantry division was 12,500. However, none of the divisions was over 10,000 at the start of the Tigray war as several soldiers who went for vacations failed to report back to their units for several reasons. This brought the total size of infantry to approximately 90,000. One division of Commando and a brigade of a Republican Guard. The three mechanized divisions, the commando brigade, and the Republican Guard together are estimated to be less than 20,000. This all together brought the total size of the army to approximately 110,000.
23. Added to this were the Special Police Forces of the regions. The structure of the Special Police Forces (sort of formed paramilitary units) is something that evolved later. Initially it was the Somali region of Ethiopia that began forming such units with the support of the ENDF. This had the specific objective of controlling the vast border with a stateless Somalia that has been a fertile area to host extremists like the *Al-Ithad Al-Islamia* (AIAI) and *Al-Shabaab*. The Somali Special Police were used as force multipliers for ENDF to control the long boundary with Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya. Its number was approximately 10,000.
24. In Tigray smaller police units were formed to hunt those armed groups that were being trained and deployed from Eritrea in the name of *Kefagne/Arbegnoch*, a group that later joined with Ginbot 7 and became *Arbegnoch Ginbot 7*. The other regions had similar smaller units. It is only later that all began following the footsteps of the Somali region and began organizing bigger units of such with the excuse of addressing security needs that are bigger than the capacity of the local police.
25. Before the start of the Tigray war the bigger regions (Oromia and Amhara) had each a maximum of 10,000 police formed into battalions (but fast expanding in the months leading to the Tigray war). With the exception of the Somali region whose number of personnel in special police were estimated to 10,000, the rest of the regions an estimated average of 2,000 each organized in battalions. This estimate brought the total number of the armed personnel in the Special Police Forces of the

- regions to,42,000. With the permission of the respective Regional Government, the Federal Government could mobilize these in times of emergency for its own use.
26. One can therefore see the total size of the men and women in uniform (the ENDF and the Regional special police forces together) the federal government had prior to the war in Tigray amounted to a little higher than 150,000 in size.
  27. During the Tigray war (November 2020-November 2022), the size of the Ethiopian army more than quadrupled. Right now, the ENDF is organized under 78 infantry, 5 mechanized divisions and a number of special forces including commando and republican army divisions. If one takes a conservative estimate of 2500 men and women in uniform in one division<sup>2</sup>, the total size of the ENDF infantry comes to approximately 195,000 men and women in uniform. The size of the ENDF gets much bigger when you add the support staff of the army, personnel in the mechanized units and the special forces. Moreover, the size of the regional Special Police Forces has also become bloated during the last three years. For example, some new outlets estimate the total number of the Oromia Special Police Force to exceed 100,000.
  28. The total number of men and women in the army and other related security services is far in excess of what the country needs and can afford. Statements on casualties of the army are very much indicative of the large size of the Ethiopian army. For example, the chief of staff of the Ethiopian army, during the Nairobi talks with the TDF commanders in November 2022, the Chief of Staff of the ENDF admitted that his army had lost over 134,000 during the third round of the fighting (August to November 2022). On July 2023, a media outlet reported that the ENDF had already sent death notices to families of over 260,000 soldiers killed in Tigray. Its sources indicated that the notification for the families of the deceased ones is an ongoing process and one can estimate the number of the dead during the war to surpass 300,000.

### ***The ENDF and Related Security Forces Committed War Crimes***

29. Following the advent of the EPRDF to power in 1991, the Ethiopian security sector went through a series of reforms. A new national army was organized from selected members of the two (the EPRDF army and the former national army), and a professional army answerable to the Ethiopian constitution began to be built. The initial results were not bad. The new army (ENDF) was being reasonably transformed into a legitimate, efficient, and effective army which not only earned it respect among the Ethiopian citizens but also made it an army selected for United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions making Ethiopia one of the highest troop contributing countries for international peace support operations.
30. However, this progress stalled when the politics of the country, instead of moving

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<sup>2</sup> The most recent structure of the ENDF has eliminated the structure of brigades under a division and instead replaced them by regiments with a smaller size. It is for this reason that divisions who used to have over 10k personnel in uniform are now estimated to an average of 2.5k

towards democracy, increasingly regressed towards a single party authoritarian style of government. The turnaround began following the 2003/04 internal divisions within the ruling party where senior military leaders (who were part of the politico-military leadership of the TPLF/EPRDF) were dragged into the internal rivalry among the leaders of the EPRDF. The regress further increased while managing the 2005 post-election crisis in Ethiopia when the ENDF was deployed to suppress dissenting voices that erupted following the announcement of the results of the 2005 election. Thereafter it became routine for the military to be deployed in suppressing domestic discontent. The political crisis intensified under Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn when the country was forced to live under consecutive state of emergency decrees whereby the ENDF was used in full capacity. It inflicted fatalities on civilians and violated rights with impunity. The army entered the Tigray war with this background.

31. The ENDF during the Tigray war committed atrocious crimes that amounted to war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in all its forms. The use of sexual and gender-based violence was particularly egregious. Prior to the war, and during its early weeks, the army profiled its soldiers ethnically and 'cleansed' itself from its Tigrayan elements by purging over 17,000 of them. Most were put in concentration camps. At the peak of the war, the army even lost its command structure as its leadership was mixed with that of the Eritrean Defense Forces and its ranks were proliferated by an assortment of special police units from the regions, militia, and armed youth vigilantes from the Amhara region.
32. The military engagement of the ENDF has now expanded to the Amhara region where it is performing similar atrocities. One can therefore conclude the army needs to pass through a serious reform exercise to gain legitimacy, be effective, efficient and respectful of human rights and the rule of law.

### ***Law Enforcement Institutions require reform***

33. Ethiopian law enforcement agencies also went through a serious reform program in the transitional period following 1991. From having a centralized administration, the police service was decentralized to regional level and the responsibilities of the federal and the regional police were clearly demarcated in the principles of the federation. Significant efforts were also made to reform the judiciary. To this end the normative frameworks for a responsive law enforcement and judiciary institutions were put in place with modest efforts to implement those normative frameworks.
34. However, these reform initiatives failed to bring a breakthrough as the overall political transformation towards a democratic form of governance did not proceed. Over time the law enforcement agencies lost their autonomy and instead became the enforcement arm of the ruling party. This situation did not change with the reforms of 2018.
35. One can therefore conclude that there is a dire need for Ethiopia to go through a security sector transformation that includes the reform of the national army, the law

enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

### ***The Emerging Reality of a Security Arena***

36. The security sector in Ethiopia consists of the ENDF, Special Police Forces of the federal and regional governments, and other armed units and formations including an assortment of armed youth groups and militias associated with the government. While these are theoretically integrated into a single unified command structure, in practice they report to different authorities and have different loyalties.
37. Additionally, ethnicity has negatively affected the organization of ENDF divisions. At the start of the Tigray war, all ENDF units were cleansed of their Tigrayan members. Units deployed to fight with the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) were cleansed of their Oromo members and units deployed to fight against the Amhara Fano were cleansed of their Amhara members. Moreover, there are reports of Army members whose nationality is Amhara are being rounded and put under custody in different places. This is reminiscent of what the ENDF did to its Tigrayan officers and men. Such a practice could be taken to show how much the army has regressed in terms of its professionalism.
38. There is no full control over the country by the nation's security forces. The Eritrean Defense Forces still control some parts of Eastern, Central, Northwestern Tigray and freely moves in and out to Western Tigray in collaboration with the Amhara irregular forces. The Alfashaga triangle is still controlled by the Sudanese Armed Forces. Parts of South-Western Ethiopia (a whole district according to some media reports) is controlled by armed groups from Southern Sudan. Parts of the Oromia region are controlled by OLA, parts of the Amhara region by Amhara Fano, and most of Tigray by the Tigrayan security forces that are under the command of the Interim Administration of Tigray. The control of several parts of Benishangul -Gumuz and Gambela regions are contested between the governments and rebels from those communities. Even the control of the government in the rest of the country is not complete.
39. The size and diversity of command structures and unit loyalties mean that Ethiopia may become a 'security arena'. This concept was introduced in the context of Somalia, where different armed units each have their own political and clan identities and allegiances. The process of integrating a security arena is very different to SSR as it must be conducted principally through negotiation.
40. Ethiopia is currently a hybrid of a security sector and a security arena. This points to the predominantly political nature of any security-related processes.
41. In summary, the oversized nature of the army, the crimes against humanity and war crimes it committed, the dysfunctionality of the rest of the law enforcement agencies, the evolving development of a security arena all indicate there is a dire need for a genuine security sector reform in Ethiopia. The preceding section will discuss on whether the Ethiopian government is committed towards such a genuine security



sector reform.

## **V. Is the Government Truly Committed to SSR and DDR?**

42. All policies require political will for successful implementation. That is especially true for SSR and DDR. An SSR/DDR program cannot begin and be implemented while an active war is going on. For all practical purposes, the Ethiopian government is at war in all corners of the country. There is an ongoing war in both Oromia and the Amhara regions. There are also conflicts that from time-to-time relapse into an active war in both the Gambela and the Benishangul-Gumuz regions and both regions are now administered by a military command post rather than their formal administrative institutions.
43. The regime, thus far, is observed to use violence as a primary means of resolving conflicts. Its attempts for a peaceful resolution of conflicts either failed to resolve them through agreement or have failed in the implementation of such agreements. For this reason, despite having an army of half a million, the Federal Government is continuing to recruit and train soldiers and buy arms.
44. However, the Federal Government, while mobilizing for more wars is pretending to have a national DDR program. To this end, it formed a national DDR Commission following the Pretoria agreement. Its remit was expanded from Tigray to include other informal security actors from other regions. Two thirds of the non-TDF caseload were from Amhara.
45. The assumption for the caseload from the Amhara region was that it would come from the Special Police Force and the Fano, which is the armed youth that were mobilized to fight alongside the ENDF at the height of the Tigray war. However, while some members of these forces have integrated into the federal security agencies or the region's regular security forces, others have joined the current rebellion in Amhara region. For this reason, the caseload from the Amhara region has for now disappeared.
46. One can therefore conclude, for now, there is no substantive national SSR/DDR program in Ethiopia as a whole. There is a rationale for a program in Tigray, but a region-specific effort does not add up to a proper DDR program emanating from SSR. For that matter, the Pretoria agreement anticipated that there will be further negotiations on substantive issues among the parties to the agreement. Thus far, we have only seen the Nairobi one and two talks on the modalities of implementation for the Pretoria agreement and not any new substantive negotiation and agreement. For example, the security negotiation is not yet complete. We don't yet know on whether there is any decision for the integration of any Tigraian contingent into the national army. If and when Tigray is going to continue as part of the federation as it is now, the national security agencies should not continue the way they are, entirely lacking any Tigraian component.

47. Beyond statements of the prime minister and the ministry of defense, there is no concrete and agreed political statement on the future of the Special Police Forces of the regions. The attempt to dis-ban the Amhara Special Police Force has triggered the current war in the Amhara region and we don't yet know of any agreed political decision on whether Tigray is going to have its own special police force as much as the other regions are having.
48. In the absence of national DDR and SSR, the Tigray program should be supported as part of a compassionate humanitarian response for those in need in the region and as part and parcel of the overall post-conflict reconstruction of Tigray.

## **VI. The Tigray Defense Force**

49. Tigray before the war did not have an army of its own. As a regional state it only had only its local police supplemented by a small unit to deal with special security issues. At first Tigray had units called '*tseré-shimik*', which literally means anti-armed groups with guerilla tactics, to control armed groups that infiltrated across the border from Eritrea. Later, following the footsteps of the Somali region, their organization was raised to a battalion level. Three battalions numbering approximately 1000 men and women in uniform were formed. In the year before the Tigray war the size of these special forces was expanded to 21 battalions with a total number of 6000 to 7000 men and women in uniform.
50. These were the only formed Tigrayan units at the beginning of the war. The regional government initially called for people to join the police once the war started but with little success. It is only later after witnessing the indiscriminate attacks of the occupying forces that youngsters began flocking to join the rebellion voluntarily in their hundreds of thousands. For most of them it was a choice between waiting for death unarmed or dying while fighting for survival. The Tigray Defense Force (TDF), as it was called during the resistance war, comprised Tigrayans from all walks of life. There were university professors, medical doctors, engineers, artists, teachers, farmers, self-employed youth, retired soldiers, and active-duty soldiers of ENDF who joined the rebellion.
51. The exact number of TDF casualties is not yet officially known but one would guess that it will be in several tens of thousands deceased and about double that numbers of wounded. The fact that 16,754 disabled veterans are still waiting for proper medical support and physical rehabilitation services could be an indicative figure that TDF casualties were significant. The TDF has now informed the national DDR commission that it has a total of 274,000 ex-combatants that are being readied for reintegration into civilian life and into the regional police. This number is composed of 242,000 male and 33,319 female.
52. The TDF has begun getting some logistics support (though not enough and not

consistent<sup>3)</sup> from the Federal Government of Ethiopia, initially from the ENDF and later from the National DDR commission through the logistics department of the ENDF. The TDF as of last month has disarmed and sent over 55,000 of its members to their homes by providing three months' ration with a promise that reintegration package will arrive after that.

53. The reintegration of this huge number of former combatants is a huge task but the biggest challenge comes from the availing the physical, psychological, and economic rehabilitation of disabled combatants. Right now, the medical treatment of the 16,754 disabled veterans has become a key bottleneck for the TDF as a result of shortage of medicine and related supplies. The total budget (for the budget year starting July 1 2023) for medicine and medical supplies of Ayder referral hospital (the only referral hospital in the region) is only 18 million Birr while there is need for medical supplies worth of over 250 million birr to treat the number of disabled combatants now waiting for treatment. This doesn't include the serious challenge Tigray is facing in providing prosthesis orthosis appliances to disabled veterans so that they can physically rehabilitate and prepare for their psychological and economic rehabilitation. The total number of disabled veterans and civilians is not known, the waiting list of TDF veterans for physical appliances in the one and only orthopedic workshop in Mekelle has now reached to February 2024.

## **VII. The Return of Tigrayan Combatants into Civilian Life: A compassionate humanitarian need and part of the post-conflict reconstruction program**

54. One can therefore see the huge task Tigray is having in returning ex-combatants and disabled veterans into productive civilian life. This challenge cannot wait for the formulation of a national DDR and SSR policy. One should also understand that this is only one of the critical challenges for Tigray to return back to normalcy. Over 80% of all social infrastructure including educational centers, health facilities are destroyed. Most water infrastructure is destroyed and over 4.5 million people do not have access to clean drinking water as a result of the destruction of the facilities. Most economic infrastructure including industries (public and privately owned) are looted and destroyed. Over a million internally displaced persons are yet to return to their places of origin and rehabilitate. Hundreds of thousands of victims of sexual violence are yet to physically, psychologically, and economically rehabilitate and the perpetrators of the crimes to face justice. It is for these reasons that the reintegration of ex-combatants should be implemented as part of the overall post-conflict reconstruction program of the regional government.
55. As it stands, it is only Tigray that is seriously engaged in ex-combatant return and reintegration into civilian life. Neither the Federal Government nor any of the other

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<sup>3</sup> For example, food supply for the months of July-August was interrupted and apparently given reasons of market failure. Once the supply failed the Interim Administration of Tigray provided food worth of 500 million birr for the two months purchased and provided by the logistics department of the TDF. The logistics of the TDF has now asked the national DDR commission to provide it with cash so that it can purchase and avail the necessary food items for the large number of combatants waiting to be integrated into civilian life.

- regions have engaged in any serious return and reintegration of ex-combatants. If at all any, it is only those that might come from the Gambela and the Benishangul-Gumuz regions whose numbers are limited to few hundreds as the preliminary data of the caseload established by the commission indicates. This project is therefore a strictly Tigrayan one where the Federal Government should play a supporting role. Framing this as a federal level project at its best is misleading and at its worst a design to divert resources in the name of equitable distribution of resources.
56. The program should be designed to be implemented as an integral element within the wider post-conflict reconstruction challenge of Tigray. The key challenge in most post-conflict reconstruction programs is related to challenges of prioritization and expectation management. The issue of prioritization usually comes at the center of the planning as in most cases available resources at a time are way beyond the required resources. Either the resources are smaller or the arrival of the resources takes time and therefore the issue of prioritization arises. By the same token expectation management is also a critical challenge. It is for this reason that the planning of the authorities in Tigray should clearly set priorities and also create a realistic expectation on everyone and particularly on the individual rehabilitation beneficiaries.
  57. The reconstruction program should consider ex-combatants in its design. Many members of the TDF who are now listed for return and reintegration are engineers, construction workers with varying skills. This skill set makes them appropriate candidates to engage in the reconstruction of many of the social and economic infrastructure. For example, there are 18 federal road projects covering 1063 kms in Tigray at a total cost of 22.1 billion Birr. A total of 573.7 kms of road and a budget of 10.8 million Birr is still remaining. One would guess that the remaining budget to still be holding as most finance for federal road projects came from international financial institutions in the form of soft loans and grants. The federal government should be asked and encouraged to re-start the completion of the projects where members of the TDF could be organized in construction brigades. After completing the projects, they could move into taking contracts for building rural roads, micro dams and related construction works. A similar approach could also be followed while rebuilding destroyed social infrastructure projects. This approach can address both the reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure while at the same time rehabilitating former combatants.
  58. The post-conflict reconstruction challenges in Tigray are huge. Over eighty percent of health infrastructure, schools, and water infrastructure have been destroyed. Most factories (public and private) are either fully destroyed and/or ransacked with key elements of their machinery and raw materials looted. This happened in all the smaller towns and also in Mekelle. Factories and service institutions were looted and require serious inputs to become operational. Schools were also looted and the registry and administration of some of them were fully destroyed. The destruction in Tigray is so massive and it is easier to count what survived the war than to enumerate the destroyed sections of the social and economic infrastructure. It should be noted that a returnee to such an environment will get little if not none community

support and therefore will be faced to meet multiple challenges and therefore all facets of reintegration and rehabilitation should be used and those international actors that are interested in the stability of the region and the alleviation of human suffering should support this project substantively.

59. The need to reinstate ex-combatants to their previous modes of employment. Many TDF members had their own occupations either as employees in public and private enterprises or as self-employed entrepreneurs. One would think that many of them would want to return back to their previous type of life. The authorities should therefore primarily plan to provide the required assistance so that beneficiaries could smoothly return to their previous occupations. This would cost negotiating with their employers if they were employed and assisting the rehabilitation of destroyed entities so that their employees could at the same time be rehabilitated. Another example could mean organizing revolving loan fund (to be disbursed partly as grant and partly as soft loan) and availing technical assistance and training so that they could start their previous trades of life. It might even be encouraging former students to resume their interrupted studies. The provision of some kind of stipend in some form might be required for such an intervention and that is what the authorities should aspire to achieve.
60. Understanding that the priority of all priorities is the rehabilitation of disabled war veterans. They are many in number. They need to get (and continue to get) a proper physical rehabilitation. There is little capacity for this in Tigray. The only orthosis prosthesis center (a center owned by the Tigray association of disabled veterans and supported by ICRC) is in Mekelle. ICRC needs to be encouraged to lead the construction of similar centers at zonal level.
61. The disabled combatants need to get vocational training pertinent to their interests and physical conditions. They need psychological, social, and economic integration. The rules and regulations (including the building code of municipalities) should be revisited so that they could accommodate the needs of disabled persons. Furthermore, the authorities should negotiate with the federal authorities for organizing some kind of 'disability benefits' as their disability may affect the competing capability of veterans with the rest of the citizens.

## Further Reading

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## **World Peace Foundation**

The World Peace Foundation, an operating foundation affiliated with The Fletcher School at Tufts University, aims to provide intellectual leadership on issues of peace, justice, and security. We believe that innovative research and teaching are critical to the challenges of making peace around the world and should go hand-in-hand with advocacy and practical engagement with the toughest issues. To respond to organized violence today, we not only need new instruments and tools—we need a new vision of peace. Our challenge is to reinvent peace.



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## **PEACEREP**

PeaceRep (Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform) is a research consortium based at Edinburgh Law School. Our research is rethinking peace and transition processes in the light of changing conflict dynamics, changing demands of inclusion, and changes in patterns of global intervention in conflict and peace/ mediation/transition management processes.

This research is supported by the Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (Peace-Rep), funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) for the benefit of developing countries. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the authors. Nothing herein constitutes the views of FCDO. Any use of this work should acknowledge the authors and the Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform.

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